# The Law of Prayer

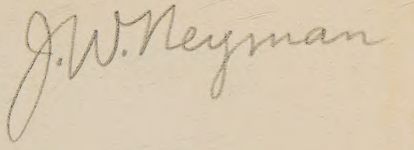
Henry Ostrom

"Prayer is a Law in the Spiritual World
Just as Gravitation and Vegetation
are Laws in the Material World"

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
*presented by*

MRS. PAUL A. CLARK

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS


J. W. Neyman

OS7L

# The Law of Prayer

...BY...

HENRY OSTROM

155p. 18cm.

AUTHOR OF

RICH IN YESTERDAYS
ALL HIS BENEFITS
REPLETE RELIGION
THE DEAREST PSALM
OUT OF THE CAIN-LIFE
GREATNESS
THE CRISIS IN CHURCH WORK
Etc., Etc.

TC
Prayer
t

The Praise Publishing Co.

PHILADELPHIA
46 N. Twelfth St.

[1910]

CHICAGO
95 Dearborn St.

LIBRARY
CENTRAL BAPTIST SEMINARY
KANSAS CITY 2, KANSAS

Copyright, 1910, by Geo. W. Sanville
For The Praise Publishing Company

264.1
O 85

## DEDICATION

To those who may unite with me praying in the Spirit, saying "Lord, teach us to pray," I dedicate these chapters, desiring deeply that nothing from within or without shall successfully oppose a genuine New Testament Prayer Revival in our day.

HENRY OSTROM.

24056

## TABLE OF CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | The Law of Prayer | 5 |
| 2. | Jesus and Prayer | 8 |
| 3. | Bible Study and Prayer | 12 |
| 4. | Impediments | 15 |
| 5. | Impediments (Two) | 19 |
| 6. | Impediments (Three) | 24 |
| 7. | The Name of Jesus | 27 |
| 8. | The Name of Jesus (Two) | 30 |
| 9. | The Name of Jesus (Three) | 33 |
| 10. | The Name of Jesus (Four) | 36 |
| 11. | The Name of Jesus (Five) | 43 |
| 12. | Intercessory Prayer | 47 |
| 13. | Intercessory Prayer (Two) | 50 |
| 14. | Intercessory Prayer (Three) | 53 |
| 15. | Almost Meritorious | 61 |
| 16. | The Essential for Toil | 64 |
| 17. | Auto-Suggestion | 67 |
| 18. | The Un-Worded Prayer | 69 |
| 19. | The Prayer Incense | 73 |
| 20. | In the Morning | 78 |
| 21. | Prayer at the Family Table | 80 |
| 22. | Family Prayers | 83 |
| 23. | A Prayer by Joseph Parker | 90 |
| 24. | The Prayer Meeting | 93 |
| 25. | The Uplift in Public Prayer | 104 |
| 26. | Prayer Overheard | 108 |
| 27. | Prayer and Fasting | 114 |

## CHAPTER ONE

# The Law of Prayer

HERE is more in the first four Gospels about prayer than there is about the church. There is more in these first four books of the New Testatment about prayer than about baptism. Here too you will find more about prayer than about Heaven.

Noting the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus concerning prayer you will conclude that its place is in the vanguard of Christian activity. His praying, his explaining and illustrating encompass the day and the night, summer and winter; the friend who is hungry and the Judge unjust, the flight from the enemy and the sheltering in the will of the Father, the food for the body and grace for the soul. He is alone in prayer, he gives a model prayer, he brings prayer into the endearing terms of the family life, he thrusts it out into the sterner surroundings of the court of justice, he marches

it forth onto the field of battle where men must watch and pray, he stations it in the temple and urging his plea from his own intercession says, "I pray for them." Jesus, his teaching and doings without prayer would not be the Jesus of whom you and I think when with deep desire for the answer of Heaven we find him encouraging to the uttermost our expectation of an answer.

Prayer is a law in the moral world just as gravitation and vegetation are laws in the physical world. We would waste time and interfere with an unalterable condition in the moral world if we should seek to do away with prayer, and what seems much more startling we bring ourselves into direct conflict with this fixed law by neglecting prayer. If the worlds should rush forth uncontrolled into collisions, and if the grains and fruits would decay or fail to produce after their kind no surer disaster would be recorded in the physical world than would appear in the spiritual realm should people cease to pray. Hear Jesus say "after this manner therefore pray ye," or "men ought always to pray," or "watch and pray," and you know that your attention is called to

some potent law as really as when you hear him say "if any man will come after me let him take up his cross and follow me." In this last statement you know you are met by the law of sacrifice—a law as really mighty to lift up spiritually as the law of gravitation is to pull down physically. In those former statements you find yourself met by a law equally real and manifest—the law of prayer.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Jesus and Prayer

If Jesus had said nothing about prayer, the very fascination of the possibility of praying should have given mankind enthusiastic interest in it. If any person could speak to him who invented a mother's heart the privilege of doing so is too good to forego. If any person, anywhere, at any time ever could speak to him who gave the world music and light and love, and get a response from him, I would try to be that person or die in the attempt, would not you? What is there in botany or astronomy or geology or philosophy or melody that could compare with such a transaction?

But Jesus opens the way to prayer so invitingly that when you have followed his repeated lessons on the subject you find yourself very far beyond the realm of natural hints and gropings. The young bird opening its mouth to the food supply brought by the older bird, the jelly fish sending out its tendrils and feelers for food, the babe crying

for nourishment are all left behind as hints which would befit a natural notion of prayer when you come to see the wealth of this privilege as Jesus discloses it.

Nevertheless his disclosure of this wealth of privilege does not make it appear so very simple. It is easy for us to overstate the simplicity of prayer. We may better admit that it is difficult. God will be the more honored, man will fit the more accurately into the use of the law of prayer and the New Testatment will be understood and explained more clearly if we admit that prayer is difficult. Many people have been discouraged with it and some have undertaken absurdities in its name. When we pray we do business with a Government which embraces a universe greater than we can measure involving worlds more than we can reckon, and we are dealing with a Government in which two great worlds are in conflict with a third world morally. When you think of the number of trains of cars run over the railroads in a year you are not so much surprised that, with the millions who travel by them and the great distances covered there is a considerable death-rate each

year. You would work to reduce it, but you are not amazed to find it great. Thus when you think of what prayer includes you are not surprised that when the New Testament is studied so little there are many people who lose faith, undertake the ridiculous or die discouraged—all in the name of prayer. We repeat all—contentedly Montgomery's words:

> Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
> The falling of a tear,
> The upward lifting of an eye
> When none but God is near.
> Prayer is the simplest form of speech
> That infant lips can try.

But we know that those beautiful expressions do not represent the prayer which you and I as New Testament Christians are to offer. All sighs are not burdened with prayer. Many of them are freighted with ingratitude. All tears do not fall in prayer, so many fall in anger. The eyes are not always lifted in prayer, often they are lifted in scorn. And even infant lips try a speech which is not prayer. That God takes most loving interest in our sighs and tears and in the lispings of childhood we know; but Jesus

says, "If I had not come and spoken to them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin." He makes responsibility equal opportunity. Prayer is too intricate a law to be tampered with by over-wrought sentimentality.

## CHAPTER THREE

# Bible Study and Prayer

I am writing presumably to the modern church member or to the person who has always had a Bible near at hand. You could easily look up the ten distinct lessons on prayer given by Jesus. You could approach the operating of this law with a real desire to know how to do it. You could say, "Lord, teach me to pray," and you could persevere in your effort to learn how.

It is not enough to hear the friendly advice, "O, just pray about it," and then run off to try to perform some little prayer wonders. Nor does it suffice to accept the advice to "just leave it all with the Lord and of course He will do right." No, we are to operate this law. Prayer, real New Testament Prayer is to be realized as a success with us. One might say to me, "There is an organ, just bring the music out of it." "It is only so high and so wide and its capacity is only so much music, play it." But I answer, "There are proper stops to pull out,

pedals to use and keys to touch before you shall have brought the music out of the organ." Thus when they say, "Just pray about it," I answer, "Ah, there are proper keys to touch." We cannot improve the prospect by saying that such a statement increases the difficulty. The difficulty is there, whether we admit it or not. It is best to admit and then study our New Testament Gospel to see how Jesus has shot it through with the light of his teaching. It seems evident that adult Christians cannot hope to attain to joy and victory in prayer without the painstaking study of the Word. Prayer and Bible study always go together.

A story is told of a little shepherd boy who was obliged to keep watch over the sheep, and so could not go to church. But in his heart there grew up a longing to pray to God as they were doing in church. He had however, never been taught any prayer, and so, kneeling down, he began with closed eyes and folded hands, saying the alphabet, "A," "B," "C," "D," and on to the end.

"What are you doing, my little man?" said a gentleman passing by.

"Please, sir, I was praying," replied the boy.
"But why are you saying your letters?"
"Why," said the little fellow, "I don't know any prayer, only I felt I wanted God to take care of me and help me to take care of my sheep. So I thought if I said all I knew he would put it together and spell all I wanted."
Well done indeed for the poor boy deprived of Christian teaching! We would do violence to the thought of God's graciousness were we to question that he would answer such prayer. But you and I having had the help of the public school and the church can no more palliate a negligence with such an incident than we could afford to neglect prayer altogether because God is good.

## CHAPTER FOUR

# Impediments

Three impediments to success in prayer are clearly stated in the New Testatment.
(1) There is the absence of the consciousness of God. "He that cometh unto God must believe that he is." There can be but a feeble delight to say the best of it in the effort of an intelligent person making a supplication to an abstraction. What joy can there be in making a request of an echo? Even the exercise of talking out to space could bring but the smallest pleasure to an intelligent creature whose cry is prompted by serious need. The Bible never undertakes to prove the existence of God. It assumes that his presence and personality must be accepted as real, and if there could be any argument it would require to devote its effort to emphasizing what must be already accepted. God—living, personal, holy, almighty, ever-present, all-seeing, free—these accepted and the cry has a listener, the need a bestowing, the child a Father. Let not the

thought of personality coupled with the infinite surprise you. Natural human love will bridge an ocean and unite two hearts, and such love may be now the property of your personality so that in your breast you may find more than a faint hint of the personality of God. With the New Testament in hand, you pity the person who does not know God. As a Christian you know him. You are to know him better to-morrow. But you are now in sacred covenant relations with him. He is your best friend. You know him better than you know human friends. When you pray you may therefore "shut the door." In the "shutting of the door" Jesus seems to shut us in with God. "Pray to thy Father." Wearied with the effort to gain the supply of your needs from things and men you close yourself in with God. Life rises to its beginnings of majesty when the cowardice yields enough for us to consent to "shut the door" and meet God as if we would meet him and no other, him rather than any others or all others. His throne-room is found behind the closed door. The Shekinah was behind the veil, the city four-square is within the enclosing wall, and the way up which we come

"boldly to the throne" is behind the closed door. The marts, the parks, the games, the trinkets may be found here and there, but the throne is where he who said "I am the door" shuts you in. The jargon is shut out, you are closeted with the Harmony.

So shut in with God your doubting, arguing nature is exalted to call him "Our Father." The long-drawn-out mystery has yielded to the fondnesses and gratifying responses of the family relationship. To be rated as a faithful servant, an attentive servant, a loving and loyal servant would be gratifying, but it would not equal this honor when you come to God as his son or daughter. Shut in with him you have joined the family, you are at home. The most trusted and treasured servant would be loath to ask for refreshments between meals, and however welcomed would feel that even the blind and crippled imbecile child was regarded more fondly than he, while a healthy child would be indulged a thousand liberties he could not claim or share. "Say Our Father," that is, be at home, have the key to the cupboard, act as though you belonged there. You may have spent years dreading the thought of

meeting God, but now the door has been shut the orphaned longing has been ended, only gird yourself to curb a reckless liberty and say "hallowed be thy name." To really meet God and say to him "our Father" is a privilege so unspeakably valuable that the word "Father" must be exalted to new value and hallowed with your fullest consent.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# Impediments

(2) There is the absence of large expectation. When one thinks of the relation of prayer to the moral world as a law the operation of which cannot be truthfully described as an act of great easiness one is inclined to ask if after all man is capable of so affecting or using this law as to realize much result from the effort. But the greatness of the law, the difficulties in prayer only increase the reason for large expectancy. Difficulties here are the bread upon which faith grows strong.

Jesus devotes several statements in his one lesson on prayer to emphasizing how great would be the answers. "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." "How much more," indeed! The exact wording of the request concerning pardon or peace, love or fidelity may be easily settled by quoting a promise made to

the "whosoever," but what of the subjects concerning which there is no definite promise? These subjects come legitimately within the scope of the "all things," but they are not definitely specified. This we do know, that if we do not have framed in thought the very thing to be received in answer to our petition then it must be something better than that. It cannot be something less.

"How much more!" Mark the exclamations of Jesus. It is good in these days of question asking to come across an exclamation. Love is exclamatory, so is joy, so is hope, and so is faith. We may well retire the question—mark for a season or at least submerge it and bring forth the note of exclamation. At least the note of exclamation must keep place beside the question mark or gratitude will have died. The exclamation begs for words to tell its message and finding them not, just exclaims:

"O Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thy children." How oft? Would I have gathered? Who can answer? Back of the words is a sob, back of the sob a love unmeasured.

"How much more!" It is a family picture outdone, and so far outdone that no language will tell it. It is an evil father outdone by a holy Father. It is a finite outdone by an Infinite. It is the earthly in contrast with the "Heavenly." No computation will reckon the contrast therefore because infinity begins where computation ends and the earthly best does not equal the heavenly least, and the evil is in the realm of the constantly more distant from the holy so that it would seem to present the most disparaging contrast possible.

"How much more?" There is no stopping place, no boundary, no limit. It is a gaze into the wealth of the heavens followed by an exclamation too great for words. Our guarantee of an answer is in a resource great as that. There is no hint that "being evil" might have destroyed the "know how" to give. If ye though evil "know how" then surely our Holy Father in whom is no slightest hint of evil knows how to give. This set in the midst of a great exclamation answers in the most abundant way our "How can it be done?" How can such a gift as the Holy Spirit be mine? He knows how. He has a

"how to do it" for all question marks. He can turn them into exclamations. He has said, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father will he give him a stone?" But turn the light of his later lessons onto this illustration and you will say, "Bread to be sure, but what kind of bread?" It cannot be a small loaf, imperfectly prepared and lacking in nutrition. No, it is a large loaf, the toothsome, the wholesome. In my boyhood the old home was made a bit dearer to me because once in so often mother would have prepared a kind of bread called currant loaf. Indeed, it was raisin loaf,—a sweetened bread having raisins plentifully scattered through the loaf. I considered it the greatest food this side of cake. And I think the bread with which Jesus would illustrate the abundant answer in the light of his later teaching would be currant loaf, made large, certainly that, if it would represent any greater munificence in the answer. He has said, "If a son shall ask for a fish will the father offer him a serpent?" Let the light of his later lessons on prayer fall upon this question and you will find yourself saying, "No, he will get fish. But what kind

of fish? Large fish, toothsome and nutritious fish. For size a maskalonge, and for quality shad or haddock or salmon or bluefish."

As for the egg, what will it signify? A bird's egg from the hedge, so tiny that the contents of the shell would be lost in a cavity in one's tooth? No, indeed! You think of a double-yolked, cornfed, fresh egg as you listen to Jesus give his later lessons on prayer, and you hear yourself repeating over and over the words, "Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over," "he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." When a man of wealth would give the little boy a handful of silver coin the boy refused twice or oftener to take it. Upon being repeatedly urged to put in his hand and fill it with the silver coin and transfer it to his own pocket the boy replied at last, "Here, Mister, I'll hold the pocket. You just put your hand in and take out a handful of the money because your hand is bigger than mine." The homely story may remind us that the measure of our expectancy in prayer is not to be according to our little standard, but according to "his riches in glory." Expectancy prompted by the munificence of an Infinite Father should be great, exceeding great."

(3) Wherever there is cherished iniquity there is a clash with God's government. It is plain that God did not provide the privilege of prayer in order to increase the efficiency of a rebellious spirit. Prayer is no implement for the increase of sin and its attendant and consequent horrors. Prayer is rather perfectly in accord with Calvary and all else that represents opposition to and the cure for sin. Prayer is a favor from God. It is a love-token. We know of no reason nor can we conceive of a reason why he should need our prayers, and so need them that he should allow a man to operate such an important law while he yet regards iniquity in his heart. The purpose of outright loyalty to God is a necessary condition of victory in prayer. Sin within the heart or outwardly in the conduct, consciously allowed locks the gate to the wealth of New Testament Prayer.

It not only locks the gate but there is a

flaming sword on the manward side of it. "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law even his prayer shall be abomination." (Prov. 28: 9.) The whole law of God for the soul is so in accord with the law of prayer that when discounted the effort at prayer becomes not only unavailing but offensive. Like the best codes of law among civilized people the whole law is one so that culprits become guilty not by breaking all enactments but by offending against one. So here, to turn away one's ear from the law and then pray is to increase the guilt until the very prayer becomes an abomination. It becomes a rebel's covetousness. Covetousness too so asserted as to present a petition or request for the coveted help of a higher power in behalf of its evil schemes.

"If I regard inquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me."

The formality and dullness characterizing the secret prayer, the chill and isolation which mark the public prayer after harsh words have been spoken or conscience has been offended by some wrong act bear witness against a purpose to do wrong and liberty in prayer cannot live in the same heart.

Truly to gain this wealth of spiritual health —New Testament Prayer—we must resolutely establish a quarantine against all iniquity. And if prayer seems uninviting and if the undertaking seems almost to be dreaded rather than enjoyed then suspect that some wrong is being cherished and consent that the Holy Spirit may speedily reveal it that you may with like promptness declare against it that "your prayers be not hindered."

A poor, ignorant old colored man who had been a slave, came to a lady missionary and asked to be taught to pray. She began to teach him the Lord's Prayer, sentence by sentence, explaining it to his entire satisfaction until she came to the one on forgiveness. "What dat mean?" said he. "That you must forgive everybody or God will not forgive you." "Stop, teacher, can't do that," and he went away. After vacation he appeared again, saying: "Now go on wid de prayer; I dun forgive him. Ole massa once gib me five hundred lashes, and hit me wid a crowbar, an' t'row me out for dead, and I met him on de street, and wouldn't speak at him, but to-day I met him an' said: How'd ye? Now go on wid dat prayer."

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# The Name of Jesus

How great, how rich, how beautiful is the privilege of prayer! If prayer were a work of art it would be a Madonna. If prayer were music it would be an oratorio. If nature were called upon to represent the glory of prayer it would require to exhibit the splendor of its most brilliant day combined with the beauty of its most starry night; and this in all seasons of the year. It must bring the jewels of the winter, the songs of the springtime, the sweetness of summer and the richness of the autumn. Prayer! Such combined existences and acts could but faintly hint at the value of this wonderful privilege which we have called a law, but once you put it to use it becomes a life. Though the act of prayer is intricate and difficult, it would be hardly possible to exaggerate how great is the privilege it offers.

Of Jesus' lessons on prayer, the supreme one seems to be this, that we may ask in his name whatsoever we will and it will be

done. This is the key of keys to successful praying. He is not content with stating this truth once, or even twice. He also rates the possibilities resultant upon such asking by the all-embracing word "whatsoever." It is evident that he is uttering an enduring philosophy here. It is similar to the philosophy of his earlier utterances when he says that if one should say to a mountain "be removed" and should not doubt in his heart but believe, it would be removed—a statement which was evidently not intended so directly to prompt the enthusiasm of faith as to assert an unfailing theory, thus prompting the action of faith indirectly by expressing a solid basis for this action. In a word this teaching about asking "in his name" is practically equivalent to saying "This is true and it could not be otherwise." The immovable, basal fact it is, rather than the exhortation or the plea. It places us where everything is as accurate and unvarying as mathematics.

Now, therefore, if we can clearly see what it means to ask "in the name of Jesus" with what assurance we may proceed to claim the "whatsoever."

## The Name of Jesus

What does it mean to ask in the name of Jesus? Supposing that I were to make a request in behalf of a brother, of some man in authority, such as a governor, or president, or emperor. I am told by my brother that my request is to embrace three important considerations. I am to appear at the proper place, and speak the request with my own lips, and I am to bring back the answer and state it to my brother as it was given to me. Now if I decide to make the request cover four considerations, or if I decide to put it in writing, then I do not ask in the name of my brother, but rather in my own name. I choose to qualify. I insert my own opinion and preference. On the other hand, if I present the request just as my brother desired it, and bring him the answer as he wished it, I have requested in his name.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

# The Name of Jesus

(2)

It is evident that to come in the name of Jesus implies at least three considerations:
1. I must accept his Saviourship. His name, his character would be without meaning unless he is Saviour. Hence if I should undertake to provide for my own present or eternal spiritual needs by my own effort as a substitute for his saving grace, I nullify my possibility of asking in his name as Saviour. Anything which would affect my conduct, as that by my own good morals, or commendable acts, outwardly, or my own resolution to stifle or submerge the evils within me by my own effort will impair my prospect in New Testament prayer. Really then the cross is the key to prayer, and Jesus is the door to the "inner chamber."
2. I must accept his program, for Jesus has a program. None so elaborate as this was ever unfolded before the gaze of intelligence.

It extends from before the foundation of the earth. It includes his advent, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his return, his judgment and his eternal enthronement; and although the acceptance of his program by the obedient soul may not involve an accurate interpretation of the details of the program, yet to purpose in the heart to obey the teachings of Jesus, is to gain decidedly advanced ground in the privilege of asking in his name.

3. I must accept his Lordship. Men may pray, and the language of their prayers may profit us, though they do not accept the Lordship of Jesus. But such prayer cannot be proficient prayer. While the assertion of the Lordship of Jesus may be accepted by those whose language used in expressing it seems to differ widely, yet the heart acceptance of that Lordship is a necessity to the asking in his name. As truly as he is Saviour he is Master, and as truly as he is Master he is Teacher, the Teacher of Truth because he is "The Truth."

Allowance having been made for apparent lack of accord between men concerning the deity of Jesus because of the frailty of

human language, let us receive the truth that proficiency in prayer cannot be claimed by men who do not from the depths of their souls accept Jesus as Lord. Yea, he must be accepted as Lord of all. "King of Kings" is a title which refuses to classify with the title of any man who rules common subjects. The "name which is above every name" cannot be placed harmoniously in the same category as the name of one who has many under his authority but who cannot claim the right to have all so subjected. 'Lord of all or else not really Lord at all!'

## CHAPTER NINE

# The Name of Jesus

(3)

Nor need we fear that to thus recognize Jesus as Prophet, Priest and King, as the door into this great "whatsoever" of prayer would make prayer only a reflex influence. If it did, what a blessedness such a reflex influence would impart. But it provides vastly better results than that could offer. Nevertheless it is worth our while to consider for the moment the value of such reflex influence. To look away from self, to stretch toward the Infinite, to read life's errors in the light of possible amending, to desire and covet the full acceptance of the will of God, to include in the most active desires and purposes other people's needs and try to lift them to the storehouse of supply; even though they may have offended or persecuted us, or even though they may seem to express no desire for their own betterment, the reflex influence of such conduct represents a character-gymnasia well worth the devotion of all men.

But such result of prayer is but a hint of the real possibility when we ask in the Name of Jesus; so small is its import compared with the real wealth of the prayer-privilege that it is never taken into account for one moment throughout the entire Bible. It is a kind of religious "by-product" which in comparison with the real output is not worthy of a passing notice.

"In the Name of Jesus!" Yes, for no praying can ever jeopardize the Government of a holy God. "In the Name of Jesus!" Surely, for after centuries devoted to his love-plan, God will not make war between his attributes as if by that means to make peace with men. "In the Name of Jesus!" What act of the soul so brings one where the most exact judgment is pronounced upon its religious standing as the act of prayer. How much we submit to Jesus, how much he is to us, and with what love we love him becomes "weighed in the balances" when we undertake New Testament Prayer. Is he more than our hastily-formed wish? Is he more than our desire to get some remarkable reply as if to help prove (what, bear in mind, the Bible never stoops to

prove) the existence of a loving covenant-keeping God? Rather than attempt to prove God's existence, prayer becomes the witness to "his great name," his accepted name and covenant record. It, since he is, reveals something of the glory of what he is to those who trust him—what he is in Jesus Christ, who "hath revealed him."

## CHAPTER TEN

# The Name of Jesus

(4)

Here is one who is a welcome guest in my home. Nightfall approaches and he goes to the hall door and wiggles the door-knob. When I ask him why he does this, he replies that he is trying to light the house. When I tell him that we do not light our house by wiggling the door-knob he becomes grieved and says that my "welcome" to him was a deception. He hastens to another door and then to another wiggling the door-knobs, and when I remind him that we do not light our house by wiggling the door-knob he accuses me of unfairness, if not of dishonesty. Then I ask him to come with me to the little lever in the wall, and I explain to him that by turning this lever the house will become lighted. The difficulty has only been increased, for he declares that I am under obligations to the great electric lighting plant, and that that is inconsistent with the

come. But I tell him that I have considered it a very wise plan to accept the plan of the electric lighting plant. The plant furnishes such good light and it is so easily obtained, it is also clean and handy. To all this he replies that he will not accept such light, it opposes his independence and he would rather live in the dark. Then I answer him, "You have not because you ask not"—you will not turn the lever. "You ask and receive not because you ask amiss"—you wiggle the door-knobs. "In His Name"—that is the lever.

It is because of the lack of definite acceptance of this truth that so many have undertaken in prayer what has resulted in disappointment, as for instance prayer for physical healing. Now there is a desire in prayer and there is also an enthroned desire. There is "rather." The "rather" is that Jesus shall be the more recognized as Saviour, Teacher and Lord. The desire may be for some physical or financial or other help. If the desire is for forgiveness, assurance, peace, joy, love, hope; in short, if the desire is for any grace promised to us in God's covenant then we know at once that such a desire may

liberty I professed when I bade him welbe enthroned and the result will be a specific answer as surely as God is a covenant-keeping God. But concerning physical help, we are not sure. We know that it is quite consistent to desire physical help providing that no other and better desire should have the throne. That physical infirmity and disease have been proved to be channels of greater grace and therefore of greater blessing would hardly require argument to establish. It is not less consistent that God's righteous government should admit of physical weakness when a person's age is thirty years than when it is thirty days. And babyhood weakness is universal. The witnesses to blessedness gained in affliction make a great host. While we would like to see them well and strong we covet their character—wealth gained in blindness or bed-ridden, pain-stricken suffering of twenty years and more. These sainted subjects of affliction are great interpreters of what even healthy scholars call the occult. We visit them to offer pity, but we retire from their rooms to offer praise. They preach to us of faith and glory, a message which makes us think of an

addenda to the Holy Scriptures or another chapter of the Book of the Martyrs.

The prayer for physical healing (since we select this for an example) is to be primarily a prayer for the glory of Jesus. That is the desire on the throne. Our bodily comfort could not be worth as much to us as his spiritual authority.

Thus when a mother whose heart was all but eaten into by a cancer looked so pleadingly into my eyes and requested that I unite with two others in distant cities to pray for her physical recovery at a stated hour it was my privilege to reply as I thought of the worth of her character compared with the lesser value of her physical body that I would suggest it to the Father. Her advisers had taught her that I should *claim* it of the Father, so she begged of me to claim her cure. Then I explained that, as her pastor she had misunderstood my preaching if she had thought that it was to the effect that I should claim her healing. Said I "Would you rather be cured of the cancer or have Jesus glorified?" She replied promptly, "O, I would rather have him glorified." Then I explained that

he could heal her and he might do so but that to claim such healing would not call upon her to struggle to believe or to agonize to trust but rather if she was asking in the "name of Jesus" the gift of the healing would be imparted to the easiness rather than the conflict of faith, but if the gift of the cure should be denied the strengthening of his right hand would be granted and his glory promoted. Next day I stood with her husband and children again by her bed when she said, "I am not a bit better." But I inquired, "Did you get an answer to your prayer?" "O, yes," said the sufferer, "Jesus is to be glorified in me." Her enthroned desire was gratified. Had there been given also the physical cure it should have been prized as tributary.

The cry for physical improvement may easily become extreme. The most unanswerable comment upon our physical welfare is death. Generation after generation has yielded to that. And sickness has more often preceded it than otherwise. Childhood weakness and death combined have thus far in history with but one exception affected the best of people. God's plan for the

strength, the purity and the wealth of man's spiritual nature at any cost seems thereby affirmed. Physical development, the bettering of health while the spiritual condition dwarfs or retrogrades is inconsistent with the Gospel plan. To be like Jesus in character is certainly more than to be "the picture of health." And while thousands of souls will testify to improved physical health together with sanctified characters and give God the Glory for both, such attainment is only worth while in so far as it exults in the latter far more than in the former.

In the name of Jesus! By this the emphasis is placed not upon the pleading but upon the abandon. Is not this the great secret of faith made easy? By this the plan of prayer is as an overflow. The old method of writing was to dip the pen into the inkwell and write until the pen was dry, then dip again and again. But now we use the fountain pen. It is filled with the ink which flows over the pen to the paper. The ink is within and the writing with it results. So prayer in the name of Jesus becomes an outflow. The secret of success is not to attempt a kind of magical wonder but rather to abandon

one's self to Jesus. Then concerning the ten thousand desired specialties you will be taken into his confidence and quite likely before you sleep to-night will be entrusted with one of his secrets only to find yourself prompted to heartiest praise for so prompt an answer.

Not even in supplication are you to assume the position of a beggar. You are in the family. Supplication is not repetition. Mere repetition suggests inattention on the part of God or possibly a merit in our effort of utterance. Neither of these constitutes any part of New Testament prayer. Supplication is progress. It is claiming and gaining. Supplication is like the rolling up of the old-fashioned window-curtain. With each roll you keep what you have gained so that each new roll means higher and more, while the light streams in, less hindered and fuller until at length the whole room is flooded with light. Strong supplications are strong with intensity rather than repetition. Our "much speaking" is a "vain" repetition but our earnest prayer is never in vain.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

# The Name of Jesus

(5)

If we consider the question of finance, we are impressed with the same truth, that the prayer of faith does not require great pleading or agony. Indeed the only place for agony in prayer appears to be when it is prompted by penitence or intercession in behalf of those who should be penitent. But for the receiving and paying out of money in Jesus' name there has been exhibited a calmness and composure suggesting the majesty of sufficiency. The late George Müller receives the millions of dollars for his Bristol Orphanages, his Bible distribution and his Foreign Mission Enterprises with a calm assurance which reminds one of the prosperous farmer sowing his grain on productive land and engaging harvest-hands before even the grain has begun to ripen, to assist him in caring for it. There is a cheque handed in after midnight, there is bread prepared for the soldiers who are to

be in the town for review but it is not needed for them, there is an exhausted cupboard—supply provided against by an unexpected person, there are thousands of positive proofs of God's answer and no agitation or confusion prompts them. J. Hudson Taylor receives the millions of dollars for Inland China with a similar composure. To ask for fifty thousand dollars to be sent by some means which would save mailing so many receipts and to get it from hitherto non-contributors to his work and within a few weeks with five thousand dollars extra, and to get it all as one might shake a tree when the apples are fully ripe and just bow the head and smile to see the ground round about thick with the lucious fruit is to accomplish a result which reminds one very much more of the perfect reliability of the covenant of God than of any wrought act of the prayer-offerer, as if by his energy or struggle he had obtained some remarkable result. But if you should find yourself perplexed with a feeling of uncertainty about the worth of your prayers, if you are at the verge of outright discouragement about how to pray or what to expect if you do pray, or

if the burning heat of your desire seems almost to consume you, then beware lest you resort to self-tantalization. That is the time when you may try bombarding the skies or by some exhibition of sheer human effort do something which will in the afterward bring you worse discouragement or skepticism and perhaps affect others who know you, with a similar affliction.

Remember that feigned faith is always agitated and it declares more in behalf of self-effort than it does of divine goodness, but genuine faith is always restful. Assumed faith storms the heavens but real faith having asked for the shower starts with a song for the umbrella.

Then what shall I do to enable me to exercise such faith and how be restful when my needs are so urgent? Shall I settle down in the quiet sense that God knows and he will care for it all? No. There is a better way. Abandon yourself to Jesus.

You do not possess such wisdom as is needed to definitely state what should be done for your physical health. Weakness (at least temporary weakness) may serve your interest in the long run better than strength. You

do not know how to direct the weather. It requires great skill to run the water-supply for one melon patch. When to pray for rain and when for dry weather is no small conundrum. But have there not been answers in these matters as in those matters pertaining directly to the soul? Yes. And may there not be answers given to us concerning them still? Yes. Then why not arrange a request and demand a reply? I answer, abandon yourself to Jesus. There is the secret. "In His name"! Will not that lessen the greatness of the answer or reduce the spectacular element of the prayer? No. The answer will be greater, surer, sweeter—and the prayer glorious.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# Intercessory Prayer

Because of its national scope and because it embraces the interests of people bounded and limited by no one national designation (as of Israel), many of the prayers quoted in the Bible are noticeably prayers of intercession. Even the prayers given in the Book of Psalms while they do contain personal requests are so characterized by the intercessory element that they lend potency to this truth. It is not an exaggeration to say that one man, just one man alone before God has a right to embrace in his petition the interests of the whole world. In the light of the New Testament teachings this truth appears with great clearness. It is indeed a truth specially made clear in the New Covenant.

Is it not presumptuous? Who is sufficient for it? Shall a man who but yesterday broke God's law and rejected God's covenant stand to-day in his presence to bear before him the interests of the whole world? Knowing

man's limitations and knowing the extravagant sweep of his wishes and whims can it be possible that (not to speak of the whole world) he should be permitted to even present petitions in behalf of his own child. Ah! It is God who knows perfectly all our weakness and all our treachery who has chosen us to this very privilege. Yea, he has both chosen and ordained us to it. The intercession of Abraham in behalf of the people and the intercession of Moses, and also the intercession of our Lord Jesus—these of themselves would hardly be sufficient to relieve us of the sense of presumption when we undertake intercessory prayer. But when Jesus Christ says, "I have chosen you and ordained you that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name he may give it you" (John 15:16), we know that here is a law of Christian living just as real as the law against theft or murder. He chooses intercessors, because he desires them. It is he who hears the intercession of men and women for their blind, their deaf, their demon-possessed and their otherwise afflicted friends. It is the same one who in the days of deep need when the princes and the priests alike

went astray said "I sought for a man among them that should stand in the gap before me for the land" (Exe. 22:30). How great the honor, chosen to be intercessors!

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# Intercessory Prayer

(2)

This "chosen" privilege could only be ours as New Testament Christians in the "name of the Lord Jesus." This truth is at the very heart of the law of prayer. The key by which we work the law is "his name."

How close to Jesus therefore must be the soul which really proves the secret of intercessory prayer. Such a soul is not seeking so much to assist Jesus as though he could administer to him by uttering words, as he is entering into sympathy with him. He is not seeking to carry out to fruition some wish or whim for his own gratification. Rather he is consumed with the glory of Jesus' work and plan. Calvary constrains him. The Jesus-way attracts him and controls him. He is in with Jesus. He would rather have his own son honor Jesus than possess any worldly comfort or receive any other honor. And he proposes that this preference shall prevail with him through all eternity. Many

people who have been confused about intercessory prayer would have saved themselves great distress had they when they quoted John 15:7 placed emphasis upon the words "if ye abide in me" and had they remembered that Jesus was speaking those words. The real secret of proficiency in prayer nowhere comes more fully into light than when you speak of intercessory prayer —it is abandon yourself to Jesus.

The honor connected with this great privilege when you think of God's Government is such that it makes one a member of the Cabinet but when you think of God's Family the royal privilege is in the household where we begin our prayer "Our Father" and soon find ourselves saying "thy will be done as in heaven, so on earth." It makes one feel that he never could present a petition in behalf of even his dearest friends without purposing in his heart to so live in the spirit of Jesus that no sacrifice would be too great for the welfare of that friend.

Intercessory prayer implies close fellowship with the atonement. It is really built upon it. While it does not add to the atonement of the blood of Christ which never needs

any supplement it does participate in it with a view to applying the finished work in behalf of a soul thus redeemed. We could not atone nor could we help atone for sin but we can by the grace of God apply the atonement, and in prayer in behalf of other people the very spirit of such a privilege is enthroned.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

# Intercessory Prayer

(3)

The intercessions of Apostles and Martyrs, of Ministers and Parents, and of Children and Strangers has borne such an abundance of fruitage that it rouses the emotions and warms the enthusiasm to even think of it. In my boyhood I read and heard of remarkable answers to prayer until I wondered how God's Government could be safe with so much human interference. But I did not know that the secret of intercessory prayer was "in his name." If we allow ourselves to go far out in thought concerning the vastness of God's government we soon come to the place where we say that we cannot understand the secret spring by which intercessory prayer works but at the same time we must also say, it works. There is the great truth of it all, it works. We do not know all the secret springs by which electricity works, but, it works. A young clerk was given the duty of examining ap-

plicants for a position as electrician for a great railroad corporation. The clerk, being young, thought in a facetious way to ask a man at mid-age who had applied for the position if he knew all about electricity. The man replied "no, I do not." Then to continue in the same strain the young man said "why do you take our time applying for this position?" The experienced electrician replied "I do not know all about electricity and there is no man living who does, but I know how to run an electric plant and I want this position with this Company." And he got the position. He knew how to make it work. In intercessory prayer it is as though we were in a central office and could telegraph all over the world. But, of course, we must not undertake to telegraph by the stove-pipe or by the window-pane, or by the gas-pipe. We must use the telegraphic instrument. So in intercessory prayer we can reach farther out and we can bring more definite results than by any other known process of dealing with people. In public services where people are asked to report answered prayers it is a noticeable feature that the faces are bright and the

voices are cheery and there is a confident note in what is said beyond what you ordinarily find in a public congregation. And you can enjoy this in all kinds of communities. Whether in manufacturing cities or country districts, mountain territory or by the sea, among scholars or the illiterate, in winter or in summer the people refuse to believe that their reports of answered prayer are mere coincidences or happenings, they insist that God has heard them. Men have waited upon God in intercessory prayer for scores of years and then have gained the answer. Ministers have gone to God with their burden of soul and have confessed that they had reached the limit of their resources and must have help from him, and communities have been shaken with the power of God in answer to their prayer. Mothers and fathers have interceded in behalf of their children until, although they had grown to manhood or womanhood, they could not sleep at night, they refused to eat or work and falling down before God they have found mercy and have been saved. Books by the dozen have been filled with well-authenticated testimony to the power of

intercessory prayer. It works. And nothing works as well.

When Jesus would illustrate this great privilege he told of a man who having gone out of his way (see marginal reading of Luke 11:6) and who when thus lost in the country found the home of an old friend. It appears that this man arrived at night and that his old friend found upon inquiring as to whether he had his supper that he had not yet partaken of it and he was hungry. Strangely enough, in this man's house they had eaten everything up for supper and now it is almost midnight. Here he is in his own house and the hour so late, with an old-time friend hungry and there is nothing in the house to eat. What shall he do? He makes his way down to his neighbor's house and raps at the door or rattles the gate of the court and asks for bread. It appears that the neighbor who is his friend considers his act rather an intrusion. Perhaps the baby in the neighbor's family has been sick or perhaps it is a light sleeper and in consequence he has been disturbed nights with it so he replies "My children are with me in bed, I cannot rise

and give thee." When we read it we almost hear again our mother's voice as she says "Hush, you'll waken the baby." But the illustration gives us Jesus' way of teaching concerning intercessory prayer. For he goes on to say that although the man will not give bread to this neighbor because he is his friend, yet because of his "barefacedness" he will arise and give him as many loaves as he needs. In that word "barefacedness" coupled with the saying of the man who came for the bread "I have nothing to set before him" you find the root of Jesus' teaching upon the subject. It seems to be this, the man is honest enough to say that over at his house they ate everything up for supper and he must have bread for his friend who was lost in the country and came to his house, if it can be gotten. All his supplies have become exhausted and even though the hour is unseasonable and the request makes him entirely dependent upon his neighbor yet he must have bread. He confesses to poor housekeeping.

When our intercessory prayer discounts all our gift of speech, all our mental training, all our musical ability, all our social resource,

and "in the name of Jesus" comes to our Friend for the supplies needed, then verily we know that he hears us and the answer is according to his riches. With how many of us as we think of relatives and neighbors or as we think of perverse customs in our own land or among non-Christian people does it seem like mid-night, but because we are of "one blood" these are all our friends and because we know that He is our Friend let us refuse to depend upon any effort we may put forth or any attainment we may invest in their behalf and come to him for bread. Let us admit that we have nothing to set before them and that our success can only be won as he shall hear our prayer. There are treasures to gain here which have never yet been realized. Here is a victory in the presence of which all our little victories are but as a dream, he is able to do "exceeding abundantly." Let us cast away our last bit of dependence upon our resources—let us refuse to use our little cracker-crumbs and come to him for bread. When a number of people in a dashy little Western city had banded together to boycott a Revival Meeting and to dance it out

of town they laid their plans so well that every night just near the place of meeting and at an early hour they began their dance. The noise of it was no little disturbance to the Revival Meeting. They persevered in their wicked purpose night after night. But the people of the churches calmly and faithfully waited upon God in prayer until after about a week had elapsed and just at the hour of the closing of an afternoon service a lady arose and asked for the privilege of speaking. She was a public school teacher in the town and told how on the morning of that day she was so oppressed with a sense of her guilt while alone in her room, that she bowed in prayer and God had saved her from her sins and she had hastened away after the close of the school that afternoon to come to the meeting that she might testify to the people that Christ had saved her and that though she had been one of those who had banded together to boycott the work she wished now to lend it every assistance possible. Promptly after she had been seated another arose and gave a testimony very similar to hers. Both persons were school teachers, both had agreed

to boycott the meetings and dance them out of town. Both had refused to attend the services. Both were arrested in their own rooms by the Spirit of God. Both were converted. Both came to the meetings, gave their testimonies, declared their purpose to assist the work and made good their declaration. It was a result of intercessory prayer. Having given this narrative one feels that he can hardly restrain himself from adding a few more of the thousands and tens of thousands of specific illustrations which come to the attention of Christian people in our day as mighty testimonies to the willingness of God to honor intercessory prayer.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

# Almost Meritorious

Probably the nearest approach in all the words of Jesus to the teaching that the prayer-life is an investment placed to our credit by God is his command in the twenty-first of St. Luke's Gospel, the third verse to the closing of the chapter. He is speaking of the coming of those great trials so suddenly that they are winged with alarmings and he says "Watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the son of man." Watching and praying—and worthiness.

And yet the significance of this message is not that prayer becomes a merit placed to our credit. Is it not rather that they who watch and pray always are people who so respect this God-given prayer-law and rely so upon God's protection in response to watching and prayer that they will be accounted worthy? And thus it is assumed

that without the watching and praying always the person would be unworthy. What a condemnation this of the person who is not fond of prayer. The picture of one keenly awake to providential changes and always using prayer as if that prism would divide the rays and that instrument record the movements on any continent of God's great victorious plan suggests one deeply in love with both God and his gracious prayer-law. Prayer, rather than discussion. Prayer and not unbelief. Prayer rather than despair. Prayer so cherished for its depth and worth that it does not become exhausted. Prayer always!

It would be easy to fall into the error of concluding that the watching were enough, for when one is so confident that what Jesus says will come to pass as to cause him to watch for it, it reveals two very evident sides to the one act. He watches as for "a thief," with keen, eager interest. But he also watches calmly confident that Jesus foresees what is coming and Jesus who bade him watch will see him safely through the ordeals for which he watches so reposefully that he considers them providences. Keen-

ness and calmness live together in Christian watchfulness.

Even this, however, cannot substitute for prayer. What parent would be content to have his child just accept that all is well and never ask or consult or commune with him. Of such a child you would expect to hear it said that he was mentally incapacitated. The bright child is expected to ask questions and desire advice. So God would have his children not only recline in the safety of his providences but fully awake to their importance, even when they are dark with trial, they are to ask of him, seek his counsel and never find it unremunerative enough to cease the act.

Watch and pray, mark you, rather than watch and work or watch and fight without prayer. In this there is so much worthwhile that Jesus goes to the verge of pronouncing it meritorious.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

# The Essential For Toil

Is it the sensible thing to work at harvesting by prayer? Harvesting? That means early rising, sleeves to the elbows, sweat streaming, hands calloused, muscles hard—and a trip to the field after supper to catch from the last ten minutes of the flush of evening light enough with which to bind another sheaf. Harvesting and toil, these fit perfectly. But harvesting and prayer, without mentioning toil, what can that mean? Why does he say "pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest that he may send forth laborers into his harvest?" And especially why, when he is telling us that the harvest is plenteous and the laborers are few?

Well, first of all it is "his harvest," and secondly it is our prayer.

He is the husbandman. He sowed the field. He is conducting the harvesting and not we. Ah! there is a nice distinction to be made between our fellowship with the Father and

our obeying the Father. The judge may ask the witness questions, and confer with him quite familiarly, but if the witness undertakes to instruct and control the judge he will soon find that his place is in the witness-box. We may 'labor as though all depended upon us and pray as though nothing depended upon our effort' but if Christian sacrifice and zeal are to live in the same heart with Christian peace and rest, we must not place the emphasis in our duties upon labor; we must place it where Jesus places it, upon prayer.

The eager concern for this harvest is so great with him, that it almost pulses in the words he is uttering, and yet he says pray. Is he exaggerating? Has he forgotten the value of toil? No, not that. But toil must be swayed by prayer. Prayer is the reaper, toil is the sickle. Can we not get these facts up again into the right relation? Can we not overcome our tendency to idolatry and really consent that God shall have the throne? Prayerless toil blunders into both failure and death. Prayer answered by toil reaps an imperishable harvest. God does not need to be assisted out of some ap-

proaching collapse. God would give us a place in his harvest returns for invested mercy. The first guarantee that we are eligible to the rewards of that place is that we have the true spirit of prayer. That is not the provision only when all others have failed, that is the first qualification. That is not good only for those who are leisure to use it. It is the all-essential. Like water when the frost has strengthened it into ice, so is our effort when prayer saturates it through and through. It bears up. The wavering has ceased. It gleams in the light. It is a—smile.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

# Auto-Suggestion

Untold violence would result to our manhood and womanhood if we should substitute for prayer a practice of talking to ourselves. Whatever psychological reason might be cited for affirming or denying certain conditions of mind or health by talking to one's self it is certain that no such process can ever merit the place of Prayer.

Indeed there is danger on the very face of this suggestion that talking to one's self is of sufficient importance to create epochal interest. Such a suggestion is radical, it is far from the beaten path. It must require not a moderately exalted estimate of one's own ability to begin to address one's self in behalf of mere self-improvement or self-advancement!

The Psalmist could call upon himself to "bless the Lord" but when one talks to himself in behalf of himself he is getting dangerously involved in unstinted vanity. For, should one really enjoy talking to one's self

how very important such a self would have to be to such a person! With an appeal to no one higher than to one's self and with no one to respond but one's self, this is to make the fulcrum out of one's pride and the lever out of one's own arm; from whence shall the power be gotten to make such a lever effective?

Is there a hint in such practice that Prayer is nerve-racking? Does it suggest that while to appeal to yourself would be passifying, to appeal to God would be disturbing? Then such a theory would be a libel against God and a delusion for man.

Before we plan to substitute any mental process for prayer we must at least arouse to approach the abounding blessings pledged in the New Testament to those who will ask of God.

The call for self-control *follows* the call for prayer. Indeed self-control results upon prayer for "the peace of God that passes all understanding guards the heart" of him who does "in all things by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving" let his request be made known unto God.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

# The Un-Worded Prayer

When in some great perplexity or distress we reach out and stretch up toward a help we feel we cannot forego, when prompted by some sore affliction or temptation we seem to be at the place where it must be either help or death, "we know not what to pray for as we ought," God is then so compassionate, so ready to bear what would over-load and crush us that such a soul-cry assures a special answer. Under no such conditions can we suffer anguish because he withdraws or hides his hand of power. No, it is then that he helps our infirmities. It is then too, that we see our infirmities fully disclosed. Too infirm to reason with accustomed correctness, too infirm to remember with any degree of clearness yesterday's prosperity and bliss, too infirm to imagine the beauty of to-morrow's glory after to-day's depressing storm has cleared away, too infirm to speak the prayer we offer, it is voiced in "groanings." Deeper than the light-

ly uttered sentiment in song and deeper than the well-worded theory, the soul-cry heard on High is too deep then for frail words. Dr. Grenfel's friend tells how he took his young son who was recovering from illness out to rusticate and when absent from mother and home, one evening the boy without any apparently unusual symptoms died. This father says that he used to talk very much when trying to comfort the bereaved but since the sudden death of his own boy, his only son, he just comforts them by saying, "I know, I know." His eyes and facial expression have to tell the rest. Oh, there is a prayer which Heaven must read in the eyes or the face which can find words only to say "Thou knowest, Thou knowest." And it is the Holy Spirit who so helpeth our infirmities at such a time that words, words, words are substituted with the prayer they never could speak. The same God who "hears the cry knows the grief and sees the sorrow." Truly, "some prayers move like an autumn leaf blown by an idle breath; others move like a plough share driven by steam."

But beware at such a time lest you fall into

complaining instead of spiritual groaning. Recall that our Lord Jesus not only "sighed" before he cured the blind man but he groaned in spirit when the afflictions of a sorrowing multitude were appealing to him. So, the groan of the murmurer or the fretter must not be mistaken for the groanings of prayer. Any sorrow which robs us of prayer discounts the loving-kindness of God. But still looking to him, still trusting his sure word, the soul may find no words strong enough to tell either the need or the confidence which the inner groaning declares so acceptably that the answer is given with an unusual personal revealing of the presence of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.

"Oh! Lord if thou art in that sigh,
Then hear thyself within me pray,
Hear in my heart thy Spirit's cry,
Mark what my laboring soul would say;
Answer the deep unuttered groan,
And show that thou and I are one."

Speaking of those moments when weariness and the confusion of affairs results in dismay a writer says "Not toward the hills, not toward our friends, not toward our problem, but straight into the face of God we look.

There is such beauty there that we forget to look away. We see wonderful, precious, unutterable things. The voice of Jesus comes out of the sunshine, and we can think of nothing except that he is there, and that he is our Friend.

It is hard to worry after that. It is his world we live in. Our possessions, our homes, our friends, our work—all are his. When we think of the problem again it seems to have solved itself. Or, if not, we know the answer will be awaiting for us when the time for action has come."

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

# The Prayer Incense

There is a superior regard for fitness, a certain refined desire and ambition in the words "let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense." The historic setting, the fragrance, the offering of that which costs, combine to express a religious etiquette. You feel as you read the expression that while the mere putting together of intelligible and pleasant sounding words and phrases would be a travesty on prayer and an exhibition of vanity yet there is a certain fitness of soul-desire as well as of words which reveals a delicate concern decidedly in contrast with the hapless rush of the rude and thoughtless.

As to what character shall best represent this becoming refinement in prayer, it would appear quite evident that the wording of prayers in the Bible and especially in the New Testament offer us an excellent model. When a very earnest man said in his prayer "Lord, I would give anything if you would

grant my request to-day" and also "Lord you could do it just as well as not" it might not have been necessary for the prayer to have been worded otherwise to insure an answer but the "incense" was missing.

The expression so often heard to the effect that God is more engaged about blessing the people than we can possibly be and that the great Gospel work is his before it is ours while undoubtedly true is not favored with a parallel or similar expression in any New Testament prayer.

The Lord's Prayer, the Intercessory Prayer (John Seventeen) and St. Paul's description of his prayer in the third chapter of Ephesians all bear a certain robust delicacy which is lacking in this expression. So also would not the expression "O Lord, *somehow* do this or that" seem to suggest that the lines along which he does things are not defined nor are the terms of his covenant clearly stated? By-the-covenant-way, in-the-promise-way, in-the-Christ's-name-way, according-to-the-riches-in-glory-way—these bear clearly with them the New Testament quality. But when a distinguished Educator and Preacher began his

prayer "Our Father who art *on the earth* and in heaven," the Heavens must have felt like inquiring of him if he desired to revise Jesus' wording. The incense was lacking. It is the consideration of the delicacy of the act of prayer which has led so many to speak the words more slowly and weigh their meaning more carefully as they have become more fond of prayer and more successful in it. No lack of animation or enthusiasm need exist on account of regard for this truth. On the other hand the soul's fondness for the New Testament flavor will claim for it all the more the earnestness of Jesus and Peter and Mary and Paul.

And regard for this truth will assist us very greatly to avoid "cant" phrases as well as rude utterances which, however they may affect older people, tend to either disgust the young or else to encourage them in wholesale irreverence toward God.

A pure motive in prayer may well employ pure and becoming words with such an inflection in the voice as would suggest deep regard for God's holy character and settled confidence in his readiness to hear and bless those who call upon him.

When a prayer is introduced with "O Lord we do not ask so and so" it lacks the New Testament savor. It lacks the Old Testament savor too. The expression "lead us not into temptation" is as close as Scripture prayers approach such a use of the negative but that is in distinct contrast with stating to God what "we do not pray for." That positively prays for something. This expression while professing to convey a prayer really declares what are the things for which prayer is not being offered. It is too explanatory. It discounts the Lord's interest in our prayer. Those who teach that the expression "lead us not into temptation" should be written with a comma after us, or that not into temptation might be bracketed offer an interesting comment on this question of reducing to the minimum negative petitions in our praying.

This "incense" idea should help us also to rise above that tone of voice and wording of the prayer which seems to characterize the effort as our address delivered chiefly to the people who hear us. If we set forth our prayer as incense before God, they who hear will be bene-

fited, but the chief interest in the effort shall have been realized because some sweetness was discovered in it by the Lord himself. The almost boundlessness of the provisions of grace and the exceeding greatness and preciousness of the promises are not intended to call us down to the least rudeness or to an effort that savors of the fetich worshipper's attempt to produce effect through his own voice or ceremony; they are rather his means of calling us up where though we may call him Father we forget not to say "hallowed by thy name."

## CHAPTER TWENTY

# In The Morning

(Mark 1 : 35).

A right recognition of our Lord's care for all people may be cherished without our reckoning that his object in going "while it was yet a great while before day" into the mountain to pray was chiefly that he might remember them while wrapt in helplessness, asleep. We may rather think that he is praying there at that hour with a view to what they will do when they awaken. Prayer has been robbed of much of its value by our habit of thinking that it is mainly a good practice before sleeping. The thought suggests that since special defenselessness is to be reckoned with, as we are about to go into unconsciousness we must appeal to God to watch over us while we sleep. Truly so. But prayer as properly belongs to duties and callings of the morning. Prayer has not nearly revealed its full worth when in answer God has protected us while we did nothing, wrapped in the image of death. Prayer is for the toil, the battle, the problem,

the day's effort as well as for the perils of the night's sleep.

The great prayers of Jesus and the saints in the New Testament do not reveal so much the desire for protection as for equipment. They are less engaged with the fortress and more with the open battle field. They are order-getters rather than hospital-ministries. They look toward the day's endurance rather than the night's rest.

Men who pray at night when worn out are very easily made the captives of formality and dullness unless they pray statedly in the morning too when the mind is rested and real fresh outlook toward active life is before them. Out from that prayer offered in the early morning Jesus goes at Simon's word "all men seek for thee." Out of the prayer season into the presence of public need he goes, showing us that we may well do likewise.

"My voice also shalt thou hear in the morning."

"In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee and will look up."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

# Prayer at the Family Table

"Papa does 'oo know how too?" It was a young child who said it. Her father was a prosperous business man and for the first time she heard him request that all heads be bowed at the breakfast table while he asked the blessing. The little child had been visiting at her Uncle's where it was the family custom to pray and give thanks at the table. But she was so surprised to hear her father undertake it that she seemed to think that after hard study he had learned * * * * at last. So after the blessing had been asked she sat staring into her father's face until he inquired why she looked at him so much, only to get the answer from her "Papa, does 'oo know how too?"

"Give us this day our daily bread" is no mere sentimental request, for he must give it or we will never have it. We are not yet scientific enough to explain why the fruits of the earth come forth with their delicious

flavors and nutritious values, nor have we been able to contrive anything which will produce such foods. We may get our three meals a day without asking for them but it is our Lord and Saviour who teaches that we should ask for them. And we will receive them nobler and appreciate them better if whenever we partake of refreshment for our physical appetites we shall pray and give thanks remembering the custom of our Lord Jesus. One would hardly have expected the Gospel narrative to have stated that He fed the multitude *after that he had given thanks.* The feeding of the multitude with a few loaves and fishes was such a remarkable event that the narrator by adding the words "after that he had given thanks" evidently intended to remind us with special emphasis of our Saviour's custom.

The prayer and thanksgiving at the meal time may be offered in a very few sentences but let it never be done as if in such a hurry as to be begging a chance for its place in the program of daily living.

Much is gained in some families by having the grace at the table sung and many a family has relished the meal better and found

the conversation at the table made more wholesome by the singing of

"Be present at our table, Lord,
Be here and everywhere adored;
These creatures bless, and grant that we
May feast in Paradise with Thee."

Or with this,

"We thank thee, Lord, for this our food,
But more because of Jesus' blood;
Let manna to our souls be given,
The Bread of Life sent down from Heaven."

Or with the following,

"We thank Thee, for Thy presence, Lord,
For all that crowns our social board;
May all the hungry now be fed,
And share with us Thy 'living bread.'"

Ah, it is all abundantly worth while for with the proper use of such expressions the spirit is fed afresh before the physical appetites are newly gratified.

A little girl whose mother was hastening to meet an engagement and had therefore started to eat her luncheon before the rest of the family had gathered about the table was so astonished that she cried "O mamma, you have eaten some unblessed food."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

# Family Prayers

Family difficulties, family afflictions, family temptations, family disagreements and family bereavements are so plainly in evidence that one should hardly need to make a plea for the importance of family prayers. But the returned missionaries who have been absent from our land for many years tell us that they are persuaded that many church members no longer consider the calling of the family together for prayers in the morning or evening, or both, a part of the family program. Now and again, too, you will meet a man of perverse habits out in the world who will bitterly accuse the church because its members neglect this excellent family custom.

A man whose influence has extended widely and mightily for integrity and godliness says that his father owned a grist mill and when a new miller had been engaged to run the mill his father sent him out early in the morning to call this miller in to family pray-

ers but the miller answered the boy that he was too busy in the mill and could not come in. Returning this answer to his father the boy was sent back again to the miller to say to him that the family was waiting for him to come in to family prayers. Then the miller replied "tell your father that I will have to shut down the mill." The boy brought the reply to the father only to get his prompt answer "Tell the miller to shut down the mill."

The plea that we are too busy in these days for family prayers will not suffice. We have all the time there is to devote to something. We are living but one short, uncertain life in this world. We have time for all kinds of recreations, and of the great wastings common to humanity; the waste of time must rank as one. We can gain time for family prayers by reducing this waste. Time is too valuable to waste anyway and certainly it is much too valuable to waste when we might use a few minutes of each day in prayer with the family.

A man whose business is of large proportions and under whose direct supervision four hundred clerks are engaged holds him-

self to strict attention to family prayers. When I was entertained in his home he made the whole service so cheerful, so inviting and so profitable that I can never thank him sufficiently for the blessing which I, as a guest in his family, received from it. It was undertaken with such a significance of pleasure rather than the effort born of an irksome duty that one would look forward to it pleasantly as to a picnic.

There are two classes of people who will find the conducting of family prayers difficult at first.

There is the parent who has long neglected it. The general trend of affairs in his home has been started in another direction. The conducting of family prayers is not expected by the members of his family. A custom of living has been established with family prayers not included. What shall he do? The answer to this is where the test will come severely. It is just here that he is in danger of playing the coward by saying that he cannot take up this duty or of feeding his vanity by declaring that it would humiliate him before his family. If such a parent knows of no better way let me advise him to call

his family about him and tell them how he feels concerning this duty, let him speak right out what is in his heart concerning it. He will find that the children will help him and almost surely his wife will assist him. It may be that the first effort will seem terribly tangled and awkward, but God will know that it was an effort of obedience and, 'that is better than sacrifice.' If you were sure that you were nearing death and that your last earthly ministry in behalf of your family were at hand you would call them together and speak to them concerning these spiritual things, why not meet the issue squarely and take up these questions with them to-day insofar as they have to do with the matter of family prayers in your home. Also the temptation to omit this duty or to forego this privilege is likely to assail the person just starting in married life. It is so easy then for one to question whether it would not be an example of arrogance for him to propose prayer with his wife. Would it not imply at least a slight lack of confidence in her Christian devotion. Or would not secret prayer serve the end desired better.

It is not necessary to substitute for secret prayer the practice of praying together. Each has its own special work. And as for the estimate which would be placed upon it by the party listening as you pray it could not be justifiably critical or inappreciative. Would it not rather commend you as faithful than offering a reason for criticising you as arrogant. Do not hesitate to suggest the custom from the very first. It will sweeten the experience, it will help control the appetites and passions and it will leave a precious memory as years multiply.

A bride's first letter to the relatives from her new home stated that after she and her husband had spent the first few hours there, night coming on, her husband searched among their belongings and found his Bible and read a few verses after which they knelt together in prayer. She added "we are greatly interested in the wedding presents and our new outfit for our home but what pleases me most of all is that we are to have a Christian home."

They used to tell of the young man who threw up his job because his employer had no family prayers in his home. The young

man lived with the employer's family. It was said that when his friend asked the young man why he had decided to leave the employer he replied that it was because he had no roof on his house. "No roof on his house" said the inquirer, "how absurd. He lives in a fine house." "Ah" replied the young toiler, "but my mother always said that where they have no family prayers they have no roof on the house and every fierce storm of temptation and trouble beats in upon the members of that family and works all kinds of havoc with them. My employer has no family prayers, so he has no roof on his house and I am going to see if I cannot find some man to employ me who has one."

It is true a prayerless home is a roofless home. Every pelting hail of adversity will strike in to the distress of the inmates, and sorrow in such a home is doubly distressing. Family prayers are to the home what June days are to nature or what the fresh spring in the hillside is to the landscape. They are the means of rich endearment and strong protection and heavenly enlightening. When we die their blessing continues and

while we live it is ever growing. Home becomes very much more than a house when family prayers with Christ as the Head of the family and the Host of the guests contribute their blessed meaning to the place.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

# A Prayer by Joseph Parker

Father of our spirits, do thou come to us in Jesus Christ thy Son, then we can bear thy glory. No man can see the light in which thou livest and yet himself live; but the humblest, most broken-hearted, can look upon Jesus Christ, and become immortal. We would always see thy Son; we would begin the day with him; at noontide we would be found close beside him; at twilight we would be within hearing of his voice; all night we would sleep in his arms. Help us to love him, more and more, as day is added to day in our little life; may we, by the power of the Holy Ghost see him more clearly, receive him more fully, obey him more willingly, and live for him without distraction or hesitation. He loved us all; he loved old age and childhood; he had a word of kindness for those to whom none but himself ever spoke; he left others behind when they were tired, that he might go forward and save the lost. Jesus goes alone; we

cannot keep pace with him; he seeks and saves the lost ones. We need this blessed Son of God in our life; without him we are lost, confused, in darkness and trouble; we are bewildered by questions to which there are no answers, and the future is a tremendous cloud: but with Jesus Christ we can do all things, yea, we glory exceedingly in tribulation also; the deeper and blacker the water, the surer his grasp of our life: we bless thee that we know him in the wilderness, in the river, in the furnace, in the difficult place, more perfectly than we can know him in morning sunshine, or in summer calm. Jesus Christ knew all hearts, understood all necessities, touched all pain so as to heal it, and by his very benignity and complacency looked men into newness of strength and hope. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; his the name that is above every name, and his the all-absorbing, all-eclipsing glory: the praise be his for our salvation, for our hope, for a broader, better life, for every expectation that scorns the limitation and the judgment of time. The Lord send into our hearts great gladness; the Lord enable us to glory beyond the Cross, and

according to the necessity of the Cross, as the gateway opening upon the glory. At the Cross we say our prayers, we sing our song, and end our cry with the heart's amen. Amen.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

# The Prayer Meeting

The Evangelical churches have been accustomed for so long a time to announce the mid-week prayer meeting that the general public would be astonished if the mentioning of it were omitted from the calendar, or from the list of announcements made from the pulpit on the Lord's day. It does not bespeak an improved condition to announce "mid-week service" instead of "the prayer meeting," and especially when such an announcement implies that the service is to be chiefly given (if not almost entirely) to an address by the leader of the meeting. Without discounting the value of instruction or sounding an unappreciative note concerning the message of the pastor or other leader of the meeting, there is a value in the meeting for prayer where prayer is the one outstanding feature of the program which cannot be successfully substituted with any other way of spending the hour.

It is considerably less than a hundred years

ago since "conventicles" were forbidden by law in Great Britain. They were indeed allowed but the law still remained on the statutes against them reminding us that the privilege of conducting prayer-meetings has been a costly one. And it is still essentially a costly privilege. It is easier to deliver an address on some subject of general interest than to be the means in God's hands of begetting a spirit of delight in prayer among the membership of the church. It is to be understood that every true Minister of Jesus Christ is eager that his people may prove the sweetness, the luxury, the power of prayer, but it is so seriously possible for us to shrink from paying the price which will bring us the power to lead the people into this wealth; that to consider a real, genuine prayer-meeting as a part of the program of the church would frighten us until we would fail to attempt it. We believe in its value but how to make it a fact in our church-life—that is the question.

It cannot be considered sufficient for the church to arouse to a new enthusiasm concerning the prayer-meeting; she must repent for having neglected it. We who have been

leaders in church services may have to lead the way in this repentance. The people agree that the prayer is needed. They know that the neglect of it has been very great. It is remarkable how they will be impressed with public prayer when they feel that the heart goes with it and that the prayer is really offered to God. It could scarcely be denied that in multiplied instances the prayer meeting has suffered for want of preparation on the part of the leader. It has been made a kind of chinking service. It would remind you of the bow on the boy's hat-band, not a necessity but customarily considered a part of the hat, only you would require to have the boy awkwardly made and unartistic in appearance. The strongest and most successful pastors seem to consider that the preparation for the prayer-meeting is quite as difficult as the preparation for Sunday's services. But it is possible for a pastor to adopt such a tone of voice, to announce the hymns so listlessly, to introduce the special subject to be considered so apologetically, to remain seated so lazily and to intimate that the service will continue so briefly that businesslike men and thoughtful women consider

the whole undertaking a dangerous joke, and when the announcement for such a service is made on the Lord's day it is listened to with just about as much interest as if the preacher were to announce the direction of the wind.

We make no plea for multiplying words or repeating ornate sentences while our heads are bowed. We advocate no attempt to advertise our personal sorrows or our personal benefactions or attainments but by the administering of a little assistance through the quotation of Scripture texts or the suggestion of special subjects for prayer, and above all, by bringing to the people an atmosphere of appreciation of prayer we can prove that the prayer-meeting becomes the Nilometer of the church. It need not be noisy. Extravagant statements need have no place in it. But, neither need it lack zeal and heartiness and spiritual life.

Undoubtedly a few minutes should be given by the leader to the direction of the thought of the people. The thought might be directed one week toward the welfare of the family, one week toward the sending of the Gospel to the non-Christian world, one

week toward the welfare of the youth, and special subjects will readily be presented on account of unusual occurrences in the community such as wide-spread sickness, great losses through fires and floods, and family bereavements; or notable features of encouragement in the Lord's work at home or abroad. But let the meeting be characterized specially by prayer, prayer, prayer.

Now and again the children of the church could assist by singing two or three Gospel selections at such a service. Or two or three business men would speak briefly on important subjects connected with the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus. Or at another time Young People's Society members might render special service for a few minutes in behalf of introducing the subject of the hour, but never without making the feature of the evening prayer.

Do we reckon what a great item in our civilization we have because of the custom in so many communities of the Evangelical churches of several denominations observing the same night of the week for the prayer-meeting? It is Wednesday night, or Thursday night, or perhaps some other night

for all these churches. Now when so many churches of the community agree that such a night shall be set aside for special prayer surely it is not asking too much that the community shall regard that night as more than any other night, the night for the churches. The number of people in the membership of these several churches is so great and the cause for their reaching the agreement to observe a certain night for prayer-meeting is so laudable that we may well consider it a good reason that the public should respect the agreement. The choosing of a night for the public school entertainments, for social gatherings, and for meetings of organizations not distinctively of the church should always be done with this in view. Let us accustom ourselves to calling the prayer-meeting night the church's night. A genuine revival of the prayer meeting in America would almost surely result in the drying of more tears of regret and remorse, in the encouraging of more discouraged souls, in the safe-guarding of more families, in the saving of more souls, and in the greater approval of God, than anything we could suggest to the people. We are tired

of hearing from men; we want to hear from God, and the genuine prayer-meeting will help us to that.

Many of us will be unable to read the following from Robert J. Burdette without finding ourselves speaking out of sad hearts and saying: "Is it I?"

* * *

"The night was shading the landscape with winter twilight when the man entered this town. He was no common man, and was bent upon no ordinary mission. An empire was to be overthrown and upon its ruins a new kingdom established. It was an enterprise environed with peril. Already it had cost precious lives and priceless fortunes. The man bore himself as one who journeys through a hostile country, knowing that his enemies swarmed about him, vigilant, fearless, powerful. He took from his breast a little book and glanced at the list of names written therein.

"I have in this community," he said, "a band of five hundred friends, who have vowed ever to be loyal to me, faithful to my cause. They know that it is in danger. This is the night of their own appointment

for meeting me, that I may instruct and encourage and strengthen them."

The deep tone of the bell broke upon the air. "It is the signal for their gathering," said the man, and hastened forward. Soon he paused before a large building, which, save for one dimly lighted room in the rear of the basement, was empty and silent. A man, evidently on guard, stood near the door. He started as the stranger saluted him.

"I am expecting to meet some friends here to-night."

The janitor looked suspiciously at him.

"You'll have to wait, then," he said presently. "There won't be anybody around here for half an hour yet."

"You are a member of the band that assembles here?"

"Um" replied the janitor.

"Is there great zeal among the brethren of the fraternity? Are you united, loyal, eager, aggressive?"

"Well," replied the janitor cautiously, "things are a little quiet with us just at present. Times are hard, and there's a good deal of opposition. We have a great many

things to discourage us. Maybe in a couple of months we may get some outside help and shake things up a little: but we don't feel justified in making any effort right now. Will you walk in?"

The stranger entered the room indicated by a sweep of the janitor's hand. Presently an old woman came in, glanced timidly about her, and sat down as far away from the stranger as she could get. By and by came two women. Then a bevy of young girls fluttered in, sat down, bent their heads together for a convulsed giggle, and lapsed into silence. A lame man limped to a seat behind the stove. After a while, a group of women rustled in, one of them leading a reluctant boy. A tired-looking man, in laborer's garb sank wearily into a seat apart from the rest. After a long interval there entered a man in black, who stealthily tiptoed his way to a seat behind the others. Others came dropping in, until twenty-three were assembled in or rather scattered through the room. They were evidently there in peril of their lives. Everything disclosed a sense of half-restrained fear. The repeated glance at the clock; the painful

intenseness with which they listened to every approaching footfall until it passed; the quickness with which all eyes were turned toward the door as often as it was opened, deepened the impression that this was an unlawful assembly.

The stranger softly passed out, no one barring his way. Glancing at his book by the wind-shaken light of the street lamps he went searching for his absent friends. Three of them he found on a street corner discussing the policital problems of the government under which they lived. Seven men he found in a club-room, reading, chatting, smoking. A score he found at public entertainments; a few at their places of business lying in wait for belated customers; a half-dozen at a progressive euchre party. Some were in a neighbor's house whiling away the hour by social intercourse. Many were at home, some too tired to go out, because they had been out all day and were planning to go out again to-morrow, and some doing nothing and wearily tired of it. A few were sick; a few were ministering to them. Some were curing convenient headaches by reading the latest novels. So in the course of

the evening the band of five hundred were accounted for. Twenty-three at the rendezvous—four hundred and seventy-seven here, there and elsewhere; dawdling, sleeping—a discouraging outlook for a struggling revolution.

"And what is all this ancient history?" you ask.

Oh, nothing much. And not so very ancient, either. Only, Jesus Christ dropped in at a recent prayer-meeting in your church. That was all. And where did he find you?"

* * *

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

# The Uplift in Public Prayer

When Paul entrusts us with the secret of his prayer in the Epistle to the Ephesians he gives us acquaintance with a prayer which by its wording as well as its spirit lifts us like an elevator to higher purposes and better realizations. It is an accumulative effort. Up and up you find it carry you until it would startle you if it did not conclude with "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end, Amen." And in this respect you notice that he reminds you of Jesus' Intercessory Prayer in the seventeenth of John's Gospel and of the conclusion we usually give to the Lord's Prayer, "Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory forever, Amen."

New Testament prayers have an uplift in them. They call you upward until God and his grace are more real to you. They stimulate exalted thought and feed the higher motives. They refresh you.

A prayer uttered in the hearing of others which has not this tendency noticeably present works out the very opposite result. The public prayer which conveys to the hearers the idea that the one who offers it considers that he has very good reasons for doubting that the prayer will amount to much, will likely leave the hearers on a lower plane of manhood and womanhood than if it had not been uttered in their hearing. Have you never felt, with fullest charitable estimate of the effort, that a public meeting had been "prayed into the ditch"? Perhaps the statements and tones partook of the nature of a lecture on ethics or on philosophy of religion, and when it was finished the people felt that the one who offered it had either directly exalted himself and dishonored God or else had indirectly taken advantage of them by a kind of pious fraud, feigning prayer when in reality he was exploiting a set of opinions. It has really occurred, too, that men have in the name of prayer administered a rebuke to their critics or opponents. When Solomon uttered three long sentences concerning God and his dealings with the people

and then added a direct prayer of one sentence the whole effect is called, not a prayer but a speech. (See II Kings 3: 10.)

Now public prayer can be the indirect means of such great good that it should convey the impression to those who hear it that it has been prefaced by careful consideration of the character of God and of our relation to him and with that wholesome and helpful interest which would help all others nearer to God it should convey a sense of heavenly uplift. A certain jealousy for the name of the Lord and a desire to reveal his goodness. That "O-magnify-the-Lord-with-me" spirit or that "they-brought-him-to-Jesus" spirit will make public prayer so simple and direct and worth while that the moist eye or the lighted countenance will declare why it is so good for men to "pray everywhere lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting."

The third commandment forbidding our taking the name of God in vain should prevent us from anything like a common and haphazard attempt in either private or public prayer. Truly it is no "vain" thing to speak his name. Something exalted and exalting should characterize those seasons devoted

to calling upon his name—and that too quite beyond the ordinary habit of address. Thus addressing God, we may well hope to leave an impression from our humble effort consistent with a jealousy for His name. In short, our prayer should amount to something indirectly upon being uttered as well as directly in Heaven's answer. Here too is a good place in which to consider Jesus in the Garden praying more fervently. Doubtless if we had heard him there we would have found ourselves moved up to the climax of his prayer to a far better estimate of its spirit and meaning than in the first words. Great is the compliment offered to a person when it is said, "It does me good to hear you pray."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

# Prayer Overheard

What a story could be told of the influence of prayers which have been intended only to be heard by God or perhaps by him and the members of one's family in the home, but which had been overheard! Men of distinction have been converted through just such a circumstance as this. Discouraged youths have started anew on the highway of right living through hearing the prayer of some poor old saint who was unaware that they were listening.

Few incidents of the kind impress one more forcibly than the following which has been given to the public in later times.

"No," said the lawyer, "I shan't press your claim against that man; you can get some one else to take your case, or you can withdraw it as you please."

"Think there isn't any money in it?"

"There would probably be some money in it, but it would, as you know, come from the sale of the little house the man occupies

and calls home; but I do not want to meddle with the matter anyhow."

"I suppose likely the old fellow begged hard to be let off?"

"Well, yes, he did."

"And you caved, likely?"

"No, I didn't speak a word to him."

"Oh, he did all the talking, did he?"

"Yes."

"And you never said a word?"

"Not a word."

"What in creation did you do?"

"I believe I shed a few tears."

"And the old fellow begged hard, you say?"

"No, I didn't say so; he didn't say a word to me."

"Well, may I respectfully inquire whom he did address in your hearing?"

"God Almighty."

"Ah, he took to praying, did he?"

"Not for my benefit in the least. You see"—and the lawyer crossed his right foot over his left leg, and began stroking it up and down, as if to state his case concisely; "you see, I found the little house easily enough and knocked at the outer door, which stood ajar; but nobody heard me, so I slipped into

the hall and saw, through the crack of the door just as cozy a sitting-room as there ever was.

"There on a bed with her shining head way up high on a pillow, was an old lady, who looked for all the world like my mother did the last time I saw her on earth. Well, I was right on the point of knocking when she said as clearly as could be, 'Come, father, begin; I'm ready.' And down on his knees went the old, white-haired man, still older than his wife, I should judge; and I could not have knocked then for the life of me. Well, he began; first, he reminded God that they were still his submissive children, mother and he and no matter what he saw fit to bring upon them, they would not rebel at his will. Of course, 'twas going to be terrible hard for them to go out homeless in their old age, especially with poor mother sick and helpless; but still they'd seen sadder things than ever that would be. He reminded God in the next place how different all might have been if only one of their boys might have been spared to them; then his voice kind of broke, and a thin white hand stole out from under the coverlet and

moved softly over his snowy hair; then he went on to repeat that nothing could be so sharp as the parting with those three sons—unless mother and he should be separated. But at last he fell to comforting himself with the fact that the dear Lord knew it was no fault of his own that mother and he were threatened with the loss of their old home, which meant beggary and the almshouse, a place they had prayed to be delivered from entering, if it could be consistent with God's will. And then he fell to quoting a multitude of promises concerning the safety of those who had put their trust in the Lord; yes, I should say he begged hard; in fact, it was the most thrilling plea to which I ever listened. And at last he prayed for God's blessing upon those who were about to demand justice"—the lawyer stroked his lower limb in silence for a moment or two and then he continued more slowly than before, "And I believe I'd rather go to the poorhouse myself than to stain my heart and hands with the blood of such a prosecution as that."

"Little afraid to defeat the old man's prayer, eh?" queried the client.

"Bless your soul, man, you could not do it!" roared the lawyer; "he left it all subject to the will of God, but he left no doubt as to his wishes in the matter; claimed that we were told to make known our desires unto God, but of all the pleadings I ever heard, that beats all. You see, I was taught that kind of thing myself in my childhood, and why I was sent there, I don't know, but I hand the case over."

"I wish," said the client, twisting uneasily, "you hadn't told me about the old fellow's prayer."

"Why so?"

"Well, I greatly want the money the place would bring, but was taught the Bible straight when I was a youngster, and I'd hate to run counter to such a harangue as you tell about; I wish you hadn't heard a word of it; and another time I would not listen to petitions not intended for your ears."

The lawyer smiled.

"My dear fellow," he said, "you are wrong again; it was intended for my ears, and yours too, and God intended it. My old

mother used to sing about God's moving in a mysterious way, I remember."

"Well, my mother used to sing it, too," said the claimant as he twisted his claim papers in his fingers.

"You can call in the morning, if you like, and tell mother and him the claim has been met."

"In a mysterious way," added the lawyer, smiling.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

# Prayer and Fasting

It is certain that fasting gives emphasis to the fact of God's proprietorship. When, although food is available the consecrated faster refuses to partake of it notwithstanding that under other circumstances he would do so, nothing seems plainer than that he is recognizing that God owns the food. It is God's property. If he partakes of it he is using a gift. Questions of earning by toil or skill are all submerged to this fact of God's ownership.

Fasting also emphasizes the supremacy of the spiritual over the physical. It gives character the right to the throne and the physical nature becomes the serf to character. When one can "wash his face and anoint his body" saying "my face and my body" with a force which declares that these are to obey him without such a commonly accepted method of assistance as the use of food, then the spiritual man is approaching its right of complete mastery over the phys-

ical. And what is accomplished as a result on such a day—like the concert—pitch in music can lend a mighty influence to succeeding events on other days until it becomes a trend of life, a habit.

Fasting and appreciation are kindred also. After food has been refused for a season because of the high motives just mentioned, and the time has come again to partake of it; appreciation of its flavor, its strengthening properties and its plentitude comes readily to hand. Aye, more! Grateful appreciation fruiting itself in thanksgiving will naturally follow. After a day of fasting there will be a noticeable spontaneity in the use of the expression:

"We thank thee, Lord, for this our food,"

The spirit of the spendthrift will give way to the spirit of praise. Those who think that the hope of the American people becoming more devout is a dim one unless there should come a great famine or pestilence to awaken appreciation among the people can claim at least this much truth in their theory that people who are deprived are likely to be appreciative (at least temporarily) when the

deprivation has passed away. But when one voluntarily, for the glory of God, abstains from food for a season, he will follow that effort with a sense which would make every crust of bread to be received as if it were manna.

Now these three outstanding truths:

1. God's proprietorship,
2. The supremacy of the spiritual nature over the physical,
3. Appreciation and gratitude,

are like three great lights on the highway of prayer. They contribute abundantly both to the offering of prayer and the results of prayer.

1. God's Proprietorship. We need not hesitate to speak of God's proprietorship as if it would fence our prayers back by placing before them the stern barriers of fatalism. Prayer certainly never proposes to upset God's government. Neither does prayer propose to antagonize God's government. In that long-drawn-out fight against sin in this world prayer proposes to harmonize with God's government to the last degree. When prayer "moves the arm that moves the world" that arm

moves within a world its own. We do not need to put forth an effort to engage God to jeopardize his government in order to please us. Our effort shall rather be to get into harmony with his attributes and receive "his peace." For, there is room enough in Infinity for our liberties. He is proprietor, and we are a part of the property. We are "not our own."

> "I belong to the King,
> I'm a child of his love,
> And he never forsaketh his own."

Because he is proprietor we may expect the answers great as his resource, therefore "more abundant." The real victory in our prayers depends not so much upon our effort as upon his goodness.

2. Supremacy of the Spiritual. In our day the supremacy of the spiritual nature over the physical is of importance almost too great to be overstated. Herein may we hope for the strengthening of the intellect as well as the refining of character. Those who are the most eager for the strengthening of the intellect and the increase of intelligence may well give attention to this truth. When the

physical appetites and passions are without restraint the mental vision is obscured; when they run wild, erratic thinking follows naturally.

But when the spiritual nature is on the throne and one comes to the place where to have his heart pure he would be crucified with Jesus, then, too, true refinement is beginning its glorious course in that soul. The curbing of appetite, the checking of passion, the mastery over the body even for its development and beautifying—these all pay their tributes to a victory not unworthy or wanting.

While our physical infirmities and defects are so many, let us not hesitate to accept the truth that prayer has more to do for us in the realm of the spiritual than in the realm of the physical; and that its accomplishments in our behalf in the realm of the physical are not worth while if they do not offer an equal or greater accomplishment at the same time in the realm of the spiritual. The physical is but for a day, the spiritual is for eternity. The clay will perish, the character survives.

3. Appreciation and Gratitude. As for ap-

preciation and gratitude, prayer would lose its significance were it not that the answers are so great that gratitude struggles but fails to keep rank with them. Thanksgiving is prayer's etiquette—always i m p r o v i n g. "Prayer and supplication with thanksgiving," of course! Christian prayer without thanksgiving would dehumanize the prayer-offerer sooner or later. Anything that will give freer scope to the spirit of praise is a friend to prayer.

Prayer we know does not require to wait upon fasting any more than it requires to wait upon a custom of standing or kneeling; or any more than it requires to wait upon time as of morning or noon or night; but just as stated postures, times and places become like wafts in the sails of the ship to speed it on, so fasting lends its good influences to prayer. Better eat less and pray more than be well fed and starve the spirit. Placed side by side prayer and the breakfast table if the choice must be made between them with no possible neutral ground, then, by all means, let us pray.

# Some Notable Prayers of the Bible

(*Arranged by Mary E. Ostrom.)

* * * * *

1. Abraham's Prayer of Intercession.
2. Prayer of Abraham's Servant.
3. Jacob's Prayer for Deliverance.
4. A Prayer of Moses (A)
5. " " (B)
6. " " (C)
7. " " (D)
8. " " (E)
9. " " (F)
10. " " (G)
11. " " (H)
12. A Prayer of Joshua.
13. Gideon's Prayer.
14. Menoah's Prayer.
15. Samson's Prayer.
16. Hannah's Prayer.
11. Elijah's Prayer.
18. David's Prayer.
19. A Prayer of Solomon.
20. Hezekiah's Prayer (A)
21. " " (B)
22. A Prayer of David.

## Some Notable Prayers of the Bible

23. Asa's Prayer.
24. Jehoshaphat's Prayer.
25. Ezra's Prayer.
26. Nehemiah's Prayer.
27. Jeremiah's Prayer (A)
28. " " (B)
29. Daniel's Prayer.
30. Jonah's Prayer.
31. The Pharisee's Prayer.
32. The Publican's Prayer.
33. Prayer of Early Christian Church.
34. Jesus' Prayer (A)
35. " " (B)
36. Jesus' Prayer of Intercession.
37. "The Lord's Prayer."

*NOTE—The many precious prayers recorded in The Psalter are not included in this list.

# Notable Prayers of the Bible

## ABRAHAM'S PRAYER OF INTERCESSION.
(Gen. 18: 23-33.)

"Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked; and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

"Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous; wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five?"

"Peradventure there shall be forty found there."

"O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there."

"Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak

unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there."

"Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there."

### PRAYER OF ABRAHAM'S SERVANT FOR A WIFE FOR ISAAC.

(Gen. 24: 12-14.)

"O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water: and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water; and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink, and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master."

### JACOB'S PRAYER FOR DELIVERANCE FROM ESAU.

(Gen. 32: 9-12.)

"O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto

me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

### A PRAYER OF MOSES.

(Ex. 32: 11-13.)

"Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by

thine own self and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever."

(B)

(Ex. 32: 31, 32.)

"Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

(C)

(Ex. 33: 12, 13, 15, 16, 18.)

"See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people."

"If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." "For wherein shall it be

known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth."...."I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

(D)

(Num. 10: 35.)

"Rise up Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered: and let them that hate thee flee before thee. Return O Lord, to the many thousands of Israel."

(E)

(Num. 11: 11-15.)

"Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us

flesh, that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness."

(F)

(Num. 14: 13-19.)

"Then the Egyptians shall hear it (for thou broughtest up this people in thy might from among them): And they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: for they have heard that thou Lord art among this people, that thou Lord art seen face to face, and that thy cloud standest over them, and that thou goest before them, by day-time in pillar of cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness. And now, I beseech thee, let the power of my Lord be great, according as thou hast spoken, The

Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

(G)

(Numbers 27: 16, 17.)

"Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in: that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd."

(H)

(Deut. 26: 13-15.)

"I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast

commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead, but I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey."

### A PRAYER OF JOSHUA.

(Jos. 7: 7-9.)

"Alas, O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?"

GIDEON'S PRAYER.

(Judges 6: 36-39.)

"If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said, Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth besides, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said."

* * * * * *

"Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew."

MENOAH'S PRAYER.

(Judges 13: 8.)

"O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born."

SAMSON'S PRAYER.

(Jud. 16: 28.)

"O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes."

### HANNAH'S PRAYER.

(I Sam. 1: 11.)

"O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."

### ELIJAH'S PRAYER.

(1 Kings 18: 36, 37.)

"Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

### DAVID'S PRAYER.

(2 Sam. 7: 18-29.)

"Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O

Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God besides thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God. And now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified forever, saying The Lord of Hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast

revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee a house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue forever before thee: for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever."

### A PRAYER OF SOLOMON.

(1 Kings 8: 22-53.)

"Lord God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel: so that thy children take heed to

their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee: how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to-day: That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive. If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning

the wicked, to bring his way upon his head: and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness. When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

"When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee: if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

"If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities: whatsoever

plague, whatsoever sickness there be: What prayer and supplication so ever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his way, whose heart thou knowest: (for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men:) That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake: (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm:) when he shall come and pray toward this house Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.

"If thy people go out to battle against their

enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the Lord toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name: Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto the land of the enemy, far or near: Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness: and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and

all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them: For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron: That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God."

### HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER.

(2 Kings 19: 15-19.)

(A)

"O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth. Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, Lord, thine eyes and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to re-

proach the living God. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands. And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only."

(B)

(2 Kings 20: 3.)

"I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight."

DAVID'S PRAYER.

(1 Chron. 29: 10-19.)

"Blessed be thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever, Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest

over all: and in thine hand is power and might: and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee a house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that you triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things. and now have I seen with joy thy people which are present here to offer willingly unto thee. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee: And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies,

and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision."

### ASA'S PRAYER.

(2 Chron. 14: 11.)

"Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God: for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee."

### JEHOSHAPHAT'S PRAYER.

(2 Chron. 20: 6-12.)

"O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? And they dwelt therein and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment or pestilence, or

famine we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. And now behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee."

### EZRA'S PRAYER.

**(Ez. 9: 6-15.)**

"O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens. Since the days of our fathers have we been in a great trespass unto this day: and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the

kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil and to confusion of face, as it is this day. And now for a little space grace hath been showed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. For we were bondmen: yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, the land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of

the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as this: Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping? O Lord God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this."

### NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.

(Neh. 1: 5-11.)

"I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy

servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations. But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

## JEREMIAH'S PRAYER.

(A)

(Jer. 14: 7-9.)

"O Lord, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee. O the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for the night? Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not."

(B)

(Jer. 15: 15-18.)

"O Lord, thou knowest; remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke. Thy words were found, and I did eat them: and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts. I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy

hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?"

### DANIEL'S PRAYER.

(Dan. 9: 4-19.)

"O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day: to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belong-

eth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princess, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice: therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him. And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses all this evil is come upon us; yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore hath the Lord watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice. And

now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."

### JONAH'S PRAYER.

(Jonah 2: 2-9.)

"I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the

Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hadst me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet, I will look again toward thy holy temple. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving: I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."

### THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER.

(Luke 18: 11, 12.)

"God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or

even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."

### THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER.

(Luke 18: 13.)

"God be merciful to me a sinner."

### PRAYER OF EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

(Acts 4: 24-30.)

"Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou has anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus."

JESUS' PRAYERS.

(A)

(Matt. 11: 25, 26.)

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

(B)

(Matt. 26: 39, 42.)

"O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

JESUS' PRAYER OF INTERCESSION.

(C)

(John 17.)

"Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest

me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me: and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And now, come I to thee; and these things I

speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them my word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where

I am that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

"THE LORD'S PRAYER."

(Matt. 6: 9-13.)

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

Y-n. 9-8-74.

# ALL HIS BENEFITS

**By HENRY OSTROM**

This wonderful book contains many of Dr. Ostrom's comments on the hundred and third Psalm that he uses in his evangelistic work. The following contents will give you some idea of this interesting book:

Royal Praise
Thanksgiving
Grateful Sleep
Did Adam Give Thanks?
The Rank of the Ingrate
Gospel Thanksgiving

Dr. Ostrom is the man who makes people think. He has a style that is fascinating, and in this little volume you catch his wonderful enthusiasm and earnestness, that is so fresh and effective. You cannot read this book and not be grateful for

**"ALL HIS BENEFITS"**

---

**A very helpful devotional book of 100 pages handsomely bound in Cloth Binding, price, 30 cts.**

---

## THE PRAISE PUBLISHING CO.

**CHICAGO**
**95 Dearborn Street**

**PHILADELPHIA**
**46 N. Twelfth Street**

## THE IDEAL GIFT BOOK

FOR

MOTHER or GRANDMOTHER
FATHER or GRANDFATHER
The OLD SOLDIER
The OLD MINISTER
The OLD SAINT

# RICH IN YESTERDAYS

Henry Ostrom has given to the world a message that pulsates with life, a heart to heart message, a message of help and comfort and cheer.

Henry Ostrom's charming style makes every page sparkle with life and beauty. You will thoroughly enjoy reading it.

More than one hundred pages, handsomely printed, a great variety of illustrations, beautifully bound in

**Cloth Binding, at 50 Cents**
**Lavender and Gold, at 75 Cents**
**Imported Leather Binding, $2.00**

---

## THE PRAISE PUBLISHING CO.

**CHICAGO**
**95 Dearborn Street**

**PHILADELPHIA**
**46 N. Twelfth Street**

# REPLETE RELIGION

OR

## THE SAMARITAN CHRISTIAN

The following Chapter headings will give you some idea of the character of the book:

REPLETE RELIGION,
THE BAPTISM, FAITHFUL IS HE,
THE NAME OF JESUS, THE HOLY SPIRIT,
THE ABIDING.

"Henry Ostrom's enthusiasm and earnestness makes his rhetoric swing like the exultant tread of victorious armies. Its reading is a spiritual tonic."—*The Epworth Herald.*

"It will do much good, and we heartily commend it."—*The Wesleyan Methodist.*

"From title page to finis the author proceeds in the rapture of a glad hallelujah. As an example of fervid, deeply spiritual and thoroughly evangelical exortation, we know of no superior."—*Baltimore Methodist.*

**A Wonderful Book of 150 pages, bound in Limp Linen Binding, 25 cents, postpaid.**

## THE PRAISE PUBLISHING CO.

**CHICAGO**
**95 Dearborn Street**

**PHILADELPHIA**
**46 N. Twelfth Street**

DATE DUE

OCT 2 7 1995

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

264.1
0 85

Ostrom, Henry.
AUTHOR

The law of prayer.
TITLE

264.1
0 85 Ostrom, Henry.
The law of prayer.

24056